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The Offensive Against Wages

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General Council and Planning

PLAN—FOR WHAT?
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UNITE AND FIGHT
Peter Kerrigan

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BERTRAND RUSSELL: Nuclear Disarmament

D. N. PRITT, Q.C.: Cuba Travel Notes

MARCH 1962

One Shilling and Sixpence

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MAKING HISTORY

FIFTY YEARS AGO this month there took place the first national strike of a whole industry in this or any other country. Never before in history had over a million miners laid down their tools as one: not a single miner went below ground on March 1, 1912. Today, watching demonstrations by the three million-strong Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, or miners from Scotland and South Wales lobbying against pit closures, there must be some veterans who were on the street corners in those 1912 days. Then too Socialist speakers advocated their cause: Syndicalists—Tom Mann amongst them—argued for Industrial Unionism and the General Strike as a weapon to change the political and economic system in no time at all. The miners were following closely upon hard-fought actions of other workers. Only the previous year there had been the huge railway stoppage and a fierce dockers' strike; eighteen months before troops had been used against Welsh miners. Their fortunes depended upon each other: it was not surprising if already ideas of what was later to be the Triple Alliance of Miners, Railwaymen and Transport Workers were beginning to arise. So, too, was fear in the heart of the other side, when some of the most backwoods amongst the coalowners, refusing to agree to a proper basic wage in their own district, provoked the strike. Of course, there were die-hard Tory politicians who even goaded them on. For example, a member of Lord Salisbury's family called the strike 'a great conspiracy' to gain 'dictatorial powers' by a 'small band of revolutionaries'; and he roared for the coalowners to let the strike go on to the bitter end to 'teach these Syndicalists' a lesson. But the Liberal Government had craftier methods of attending to their vital class interests. First, they rushed through Parliament a Bill to compel recalcitrant coalowners to pay a minimum wage in each district. But the miners were to be cheated in classic style at the last moment when the teeth were left out of the Bill. On the day before it was to be passed, the Government exercised its other classic function: Tom Mann was charged with incitement to mutiny for distributing his famous 'Don't Shoot' leaflet. A third of the world's population has successfully passed through their social revolution since those far-off turbulent days, two world wars away. This is what the grandparents of the young sit-downers, peace marchers, mining, ship building and engineering demonstrators read, fifty years ago this March: 'Men! Comrades! Brothers! You are in the army. So are we. You, in the army of Destruction. We, in the Industrial army of Construction. We work at mine, drill, forge, factory or dock, etc., producing and transporting all the goods, clothing stuffs, etc., which makes it possible for people to live. You are Workingmen's Sons. When we go on Strike to Better Our lot, which is the lot also of Your Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, and Sisters, YOU are called upon by your Officers to MURDER US. Don't do it!' Nowadays, before sending for the troops a Government sends for some appropriate trade union leader, with a particularly tender conscience about breaking agreements, to tell the lads to go home or else. If a government looks diligently enough, such men

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Notes of the Month

PLAN - FOR WHAT ?

Our merchants and master-manufacturers complain much of the bad effects of high wages in raising the price and thereby lessening the sale of their goods both at home and abroad. They say nothing concerning the bad effects of high profits.
(Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, Book 1, ch. X, part 2.)

THE battleground is opening out in Britain and Western Europe. In France February 13 has seen the most powerful united demonstration of the working class and all sections of the people since the days of the great unity which barred the road to fascism in 1934. Even the most hostile and hardened press observers were stunned into awed recognition of the strength and unity of the French people around the leadership of the Communist Party together with all the representatives of democratic anti-fascism. In the face of that massed unity they have been compelled to recognise the visible dwarfing of De Gaulle and the O.A.S. so soon as even the first sign of a combined people's front begins to appear. In Britain the clash, as yet on a far more elementary scale, has developed on the industrial field. February 5 in Britain saw three million engineers on strike. Grave questions for the future are now arising. We are approaching a decisive testing of the trade union and labour movement in Britain. The Government has a planned strategy and is pursuing it with consistent tenacity

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beneath all the show of hesitation and fumbling. First, the July economy cuts. The pay pause. The concentration of the initial attack on the most vulnerable sections, the professional non-industrial sections. The extension of the attack to the industrial sections. The second White Paper on the interim policy for the further offensive against wages. The National Economic Development Council to draw in the General Council and majority trade union leadership into the net of association with the strategy of capitalism. Can it be said that the trade union and labour movement has developed a corresponding consistent and conscious strategy to meet this offensive? This is now the decisive question.

Trade Unions' Testing Time

Will the miners, engineers and railway men succeed in combining their organised strength to defeat the economic offensive of the Tory Government and big business? The answer to this question governs also the political future. Hence the inanity of the parliamentary cretins who offer the slogan 'Wait for a General Election' 'Wait for a Labour Government' (perhaps a wage-freeze Labour Government like the last one?) as the answer to the present offensive. It is the present struggle which determines the future, including the possibility of bringing down and replacing the present Tory Government by a new Government. The present challenge has become more obvious and inescapable than at any time since the critical decade of the nineteen twenties. The Government, impelled by its conception of the requirements of capitalism in crisis, spurred by the clamorous demands of the trust magnates and professional economists, has driven a battering ram through the delicate and complex fabric of collective negotiations, conciliation and arbitration machinery, which was so laboriously and elaborately built up during these past decades in order to throttle trade union militancy in a quagmire of established procedure and banish for ever the spectre of industrial conflict. The civil servants and teachers have found the agreed structure for the pacific settlement of their claims, in which they had placed their faith as their impregnable fortress, and which previous governments had laboured so ingeniously to create, in order to channel them off from association with the industrial workers, now ruthlessly thrust aside by a Tory Government.

Offensive on Real Wages

Three million engineers have been met so far with a flat refusal.

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Miners and railwaymen have been fobbed off with nugatory offers, below even the rise in the cost of living, and therefore equivalent to a demand for the acceptance of a reduction in real wages. The latest Government White Paper on *'Incomes Policy'* published on February 2, has declared that none of the normal considerations, neither increases in the cost of living, nor comparisons with wages in other industries, nor higher profits, nor the employer's ability to pay, nor higher productivity in any particular industry must be allowed to justify wage increases in the coming period, even after the present imposed 'pause', above an official proclaimed maximum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, already below the official record rise in the cost of living by 5 per cent during the past year. In other words, what is here demanded, for the whole period ahead after the present 'pause', goes beyond the familiar wage freeze. What is here set out is a plain demand that all real wages must come down. The workers must pay the cost for capitalist mismanagement and waste of Britain's resources. Back to Baldwin. Back to the nineteen twenties. No wonder the demand for united action has arisen anew.

Class-war 'Dead'?

Only a couple of months ago Premier Macmillan, receiving the Freedom of the City of London at the Guildhall on December 15, 1961, boasted:

> It has been a peaceful revolution. The class war is dead or nearly dead. Almost its only exponents are a few eccentrics.

It is true that in his next breath he complained that 'we have seen a communist grip on half Europe and much of Asia', and proclaimed 'one of our first duties' of 'the free nations' will be to contain 'the communist empire'. It had evidently never occurred to him that the Anglo-America Nato cold war against communism might be regarded as a not inconsiderable extension of the class-war on a world scale. However, it is Mr. Macmillan himself who has been most active in waging his class-war offensive here at home, tearing down conciliation procedure, and thereby helping to stir up the slowly moving waters of British trade unionism. On February 5, three million engineers by their 24-hour demonstration strike gave Mr. Macmillan his answer. During the first six weeks of 1962 the number of working days involved in industrial disputes has already exceeded the total for 1961. On March 5 the engineers have called for another 24-hour demonstration strike, and during March a ballot is due to be held on national strike. The same demand has

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developed among the railwaymen, despite their leaders' narrow acceptance of the starveling 3 per cent offer. The paralysis of London's traffic on January 27 taught a lesson to the City Aldermen who had just been informed by Mr. Macmillan that the class-war was 'dead'. In token form it taught the lesson of where real power lies, once the workers are united to use it: that the life of society depends, not on those who shuffle the dividend coupons and gamblers' chips of take-over bids, in counting houses, but in those who turn the wheels and do the work.

Common Market and Class-war

In the name of the Common Market, and in preparation for Britain's prospective entry into the Common Market, Tory Cabinet Ministers and the employers call on the workers in Britain to make sacrifices and reduce labour costs in order to meet the coming fierce blasts of competition from the great combines of West Germany and France and Italy. France and West Germany and Italy are held up by Tory patriots as models of successful economic expansion and prosperity thanks to the Common Market. Incidentally, the glib statistics to 'prove' this are almost invariably based on the advance in the years before the Common Market, by the simple device of presenting the total decade 1950-1960, and thus smuggling in the rapid growth during the eight years before the Common Market and tactfully ignoring the slowing down of the advance, and even downward movement in West Germany, after the Common Market was formed. France's Monnet 'Plan' is today proclaimed by Tory Cabinet Ministers and the City organ, the *Economist*, as the glorious example of their new gospel of triumphant capitalist 'planning', just as previously Ehrhardt's 'Economic Miracle' of West German expansion was held up as the triumphant demonstration of 'free enterprise'. But what is really happening today in these countries of the Common Market? Alike in the 'planned' economy of French monopoly capitalism and in the 'free enterprise' economy of the parallel and closely linked West German monopoly capitalism, the class contradictions and conflicts are advancing to new forms and intensity, just as they are in Britain.

Signal of West Germany

In West Germany the Metal Workers' Union, by the threat of a national General Strike, has compelled a wage increase of 11 per cent. The West German economists are already wringing their

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hands over the rise in labour costs and menace to exports. An example not without interest for the members of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions in Britain when they take their ballot this month on national strike action to secure a substantial wage increase, and are met with the usual exhortations to refrain from action and instead enter into the cut-throat capitalist rat-race of competitive lower wages against the West German workers. After all, even an 11 per cent increase is not a negligible gain, compared to the conceptions of Macmillan and the engineering employers, which the West German example has shown as won by the threat of national strike action. Besides, we would not wish to reach a position when lower standards in Britain (taking into calculation wages and social services together) are used as a ground for attacking the workers in France or West Germany.

Signal of France

Even more significant is the demonstration of the French working class in action on a scale recalling their highest democratic and revolutionary traditions. Here—in the midst of all the 'planned' economy—the battle has taken on a directly political character against the fascist assault of the bloodstained murder gangs of the O.A.S. with the criminal connivance of De Gaulle's police and military chiefs. Once again, as in 1934, the French people are on the march to bar the road to fascism. The wrecking and sabotage and disruption by the professional social democratic ('democratic socialist' in the modern masquerade—what a perversion of language!) enemies of unity, of the type of Mollet, the bosom pals of Gaitskell and Brandt, shrivel up before the advancing unity of the people. In the vanguard marches the working class, their trade unions and their Communist Party, in unity with their allies among all the progressive sections of the people.

Disappearing Proletariat

How often have the Jays and Gaitskells and Stracheys and Croslands informed us poor benighted Marxists from the heights of their superior sociological and statistical and psephological* wisdom that 'the working class' no longer exists in modern advanced Western industrial societies, and that Marxism is therefore 'out of date' and 'irrelevant' in a modern 'affluent' society. Now listen to an ordinary unenlightened news reporter describing that demonstration of the

*Their own favourite new word.

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one million of the Paris people on February 13 marching behind the corpses of the eight murdered by De Gaulle's police:

> It took the wreath carriers alone more than an hour to pass a given point. The wreaths seemed to come from every factory, every school and hospital in Paris. Almost the entire procession seemed to be made up of workmen in their working clothes—busmen, railwaymen, garbage collectors in their wide-brimmed hats, nurses, slaughtermen from the abattoirs in bloodstained smocks, and factory workers in caps and leather jerkins. There were few policemen along the route, the demonstrators having provided their own marshals.
>
> (*Evening Standard,* February 13, 1962.)

Disappearing proletariat? That reporter had forgotten his text-books and looked at life. So long as class society remains, the Marxist class analysis provides the key through all its varying forms and transformations.

Foretaste of the Future

Listen to another reporter next morning:

> Today was a considerable triumph for the Communists—no doubt about that at all. Their organisation was immensely smooth. The police had abdicated—vanished. It was unimaginable. This colossal funeral procession shuffling across the heart of Paris, with never a policeman in sight. Instead, it was the Communist bully boys (!!), polite but very firm indeed, who were directing matters, telling people what to do and where to stand, taking over authority. . . . The procession was overwhelming in its effect. (*Daily Express,* February 14, 1962.)

A foretaste, as Engels might have said, of the future peaceful dictatorship of the proletariat mobilising the support of the overwhelming majority of the people, and ending for ever the reign of the murder-gangs. A foretaste of the future free France of the people, which should have been achieved already with the liberation, had not the Anglo-American armies and American dollars intervened to prevent the free fulfilment of the people's will. No wonder that the day after that mighty demonstration of all France De Gaulle raced off to pay a hasty unprepared visit to Adenauer to discuss the possibility of speeding up political union. Perhaps the gauleiters and legions of Neo-Nazism in West Germany may once again be deemed essential to prop up Neo-Vichy in France.

Panic Fears of 1926

Here in Britain the struggle is still at a more elementary stage. The clash of classes is manifested in the industrial field. But the

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political overtones are inescapable. When the National Union of Mineworkers at the beginning of February officially asked the General Council of the Trades Union Congress to consider how to fulfil its constitution's obligation to co-ordinate the industrial struggle of the unions in face of the Government's economic offensive, it was evident that the dominant right-wing majority of the General Council were not ready to consider even limited joint action. But at once with a rush the tone of high society switched from the previous irrational complacency about the supposed demise of the class-war to conjuring up spectres of an impending general strike led by a revived Triple Alliance or the Trades Union Congress. The Bulletin of the Gaitskellite 'Campaign for Democratic Socialism' (correctly, Campaign Against Socialism), lamented in its February issue:

> The reckless destruction of a vital part of our industrial machinery will have incalculable consequences for the future. Already we are seeing the first serious industrial unrest in the government service for forty years, and the country as a whole—in spite of the caution and moderation of the union leaders—is probably nearer to a general strike situation than at any time since 1926.

Their fears betray them. But in fact heavy obstacles to united action have still to be overcome. The General Council majority, no doubt mindful of the previous example, and concerned this time to anticipate before action the capitulation of 1926, have chosen this moment to walk into Selwyn Lloyd's Den of Thieves, and enter into co-operation with Tory Ministers and big business monopolists at the very moment when their members are under attack from these gentlemen.

'Planning' Mythology

All this fraternising with the enemy in the hour of battle is proclaimed to be justified in the name of 'planning'. The Tory Government has announced its conversion to the principle of economic 'planning'. 'Conservative Planning Works' is the new slogan to replace 'Conservative Freedom Works'. Treasury Chief Secretary Brooke informed an astonished House of Commons on January 24 that the Government's new policy was 'revolutionary'—nothing less than 'the great development of long-term planning'. A prominent left Labour Executive member is reported to have claimed in a television broadcast in the North of England that the Labour Party had achieved a triumph in 'converting' the Tory Government to

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'planning'. Holy simplicity! This Tory 'planning' is not a contradiction to the offensive on the workers. The essence of the 'Plan' is the offensive on the workers. The essence of N.E.D.C. is to involve the higher trade union leadership into support of the offensive on the workers. This is always the essence of capitalist 'planning'.

A Memory

Over forty years ago in August, 1920, when the first Russian Trade Delegation came to London to negotiate with Lloyd George, the Webbs invited two of its members, Krassin and Kamenev, to a country place in Surrey to address a Fabian gathering. Krassin, with his business experience and knowledge, entranced his audience by describing to them a startling new idea—the idea of planning the economy. Socialism as a juster distribution of wealth; socialism as an ideal society of the future; socialism as a succession of piecemeal reforms: all this was familiar to this audience. But the idea of planned economic development (this was eight years before the First Five Year Plan) to raise Russia from the desolation and ruin of backwardness and war and civil war to the future heights Krassin so confidently described—this conception struck this typical 'progressive' 'educated' audience of that era like a flash of lightning suddenly opening new horizons, and won 'an ovation', as Beatrice Webb recorded in her diary. With a (for her) very rare burst into italics she recorded '*Working to a plan*' as 'the central idea', and concluded:

> In a splendid peroration, which excited the most enthusiastic applause from all those assembled Fabians who understood German, he asserted that Soviet Russia alone among nations had discovered the 'philosopher's stone' of increased productivity in the consciousness, on the part of each individual Communist, that he was serving the whole community of the Russian people—a consciousness which would transform toil into the only true religion—the service of mankind.
>
> (*Beatrice Webb's Diaries, 1912-1924*, published 1952, p. 193.)

From the example of the socialist revolution the idea of planning, of planned economic development, had first burst upon the world. But its indispensable basis was universally understood to be social ownership. No one at that time dared to suggest that planning was compatible with capitalism.

'Organised Capitalism'

It is true that in the confusion of the general crisis of capitalism in the nineteen twenties, there was developed among some economic

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theorists, especially social democratic theorists, the theory of 'organised capitalism'. Nor was it surprising that this illusion should arise. During the first world war the state machine and the big monopolies had become closely welded together. The gigantic productive power of this combined machine to turn out munitions of war on a fantastically accelerating scale had impressed equally the politicians and the big industrialists. There seemed to them no limit to what this state capitalist productive machine could achieve equally after the war to solve all the problems of post-war reconstruction. The great industrialist, Lord Leverhulme (whose soap trust has become the present I.C.I.) declared in 1918 that it would now be possible to provide abundance for all with only one hour's work per week from everyone. His technical knowledge of the possibilities ignored the social-economic-political conditions. Sir Winston Churchill has recorded in his memoirs of the first world war how at the end of that war the same gigantic concentrated productive power which was organised through the Ministry of Munitions could, with the same ease with which it had turned out a million guns or tanks to order, have turned out a million houses or whatever else was required. But, as he records lugubriously, on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 a new set of principles came into operation, and the possibility vanished. Capitalism could only organise for war.

Dogmatic Slumbers

Thus the theory of 'organised capitalism' in the nineteen twenties, peddled by the social democratic theorists then just as they peddle the so-called 'new capitalism' today, was only the idealised cover for the ugly reality of the increasingly close fusion of the state machine and the big monopolies, with the big monopolies controlling and utilising the state for their own maximum profits. The real anarchy of the capitalist jungle continued, with the larger fauna devouring the smaller. Indeed, the conception of all the governing and orthodox capitalist economists of that era was the theory of the return to 'normalcy', 'stabilisation', the 'return to the gold standard', that is, the return to the fancied lost paradise of the old pre-war capitalism before the general crisis. Writing in 1933 on his outlook in 1923 ('as lately as 1923') Keynes has described how he had regarded 'England's economic supremacy' as a part of the rational order of the universe and 'almost as a part of the moral law':

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> I was brought up like most Englishmen, to respect free trade not only as an economic doctrine which a rational and instructed person could not doubt, but almost as a part of the moral law. . . . I thought England's unshakable free trade convictions, maintained for nearly a hundred years, to be both the explanation before man and the justification before heaven of her economic supremacy.
>
> (J. M. Keynes, *New Statesman and Nation*, July 8, 1933.)

The non-Marxist economists, even the most brilliant, like Keynes, had not yet awoken from their dogmatic slumbers.

Birth of Capitalist 'Planning'

It was the world economic crisis of 1929-32, with the collapse of stabilisation and the devastating slump and mass unemployment in the capitalist world, in startling contrast to the advance of the First Five Year Plan in the Soviet Union, which first shattered these dogmatic slumbers of the capitalist governments and economists and led to the desperate search for new policies and methods, including the idea of 'planning'. Hitler in Germany and Roosevelt in the United States each evolved their variant types of capitalist 'planning'; while by 1936, after the collapse of the gold standard in Britain, Keynes had worked out his new 'General Theory' for controlling the economy by credit manipulation through state and central bank action (in practice, inflation). Hitler reorganised the German economy and solved unemployment by planning for war with a hitherto unparalleled peace-time acceleration of armaments expenditure and colossal profits for the monopolists. The lesson of the first world war was thus repeated: the ability of capitalism to 'plan'—for war.

Roosevelt's Philosophy of Restriction

President Roosevelt, the brilliant empiricist, taking the helm for the battered American ship of capitalism in 1933, sought to follow a different method of solving the contradictions of the economy by organising simultaneously restriction of the excess production and pump-priming and partial social reforms to raise purchasing power and supply a market for the restricted product. His philosophy of restriction found expression in his presidential election campaign speech in San Francisco in 1932:

> Our industry is already built up. It is a question whether it has not been built up too much. Whoever wants to build new factories and new streets, and to organise new trusts, would be more of a hindrance than a help to us. The days of the great initiators, of the finance titans, are gone. Our task is not to find and exploit new natural wealth, and not to produce

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a still greater quantity of commodities, but to learn how to carry on with the existing resources and the existing factories.

The problem of poverty in the midst of plenty could be solved, according to this philosophy, not by ending the poverty, but by ending the plenty. So developed the grand New Deal economy of subsidies for not raising pigs. Once again it was proved that capitalism can organise for negative aims—this time for restriction. Capitalism can 'plan'—for destruction, as in war and the arms race. Capitalism can 'plan'—for restriction. But capitalism cannot plan for production for use. Only socialism can do that. In practice the Rooseveltian methods failed to end the depression. By 1939 unemployment in the United States still totalled 9·5 millions or 17·2 per cent of the labour force, despite all the Keynesian measures, deficit budgets and pump-priming. As in Britain, so in America only war brought full employment.

Dilemma of Automation under Capitalism

Has capitalism basically changed today? Have new methods been found? Technique has advanced. The problem has grown greater. Listen to the Report of the U.S. Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions on 'Cybernation: The Silent Conquest', published in January, 1962, and summarised in *The Times*:

> A study of the effect of computers and automation has concluded that their widespread use may create vast unemployment and social unrest which could seriously weaken the foundations of free society. . . . Unemployment will be widespread in the managerial class and the service industries as well as in the manufacturing industries. . . . Little hope is seen in retraining displaced blue collar workers. . . . No one has seriously proposed what the unemployed in the service industries can be retrained to do. . . . The cornucopia of products manufactured by automation. . . . Public works programmes are regarded as an obvious solution, but the report believes they would not be conducive to maintaining the spirit of a capitalist economy. (*The Times*, January 30, 1962.)

Automation in the Communist Programme

Contrast with this melancholy judgment on the consequences of technical progress by this high-powered research foundation of the American monopolies the confident treatment of the same theme by the new Communist Programme:

> In twenty years comprehensive automation will be effected on a mass scale, with increasing emphasis on fully automated shops and factories. . . . Cybernetics, electronic computer and control systems will be widely applied in production processes in industry, building and transport, in

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> scientific research, planning, designing, accounting, statistics and management. . . . Technological progress will make man's labour easier. . . . The planned training, instruction and rational employment of those released from various jobs and transferred to other jobs due to mechanisation and automation are essential . . . increasing fusion of physical and mental labour and the growing proportion of engineers and technicians in every industrial enterprise . . . the extensive participation of workers' collectives in the management of enterprises.
>
> (Programme of the C.P.S.U., 22nd Congress, October, 1961.)

On this basis is set out the clear perspective of the advance to continuously rising abundance for all, the outstripping of the highest living standards of the most advanced capitalist societies, and the transition to the new higher stage of human development, to communist society. In this contrast of two perspectives is seen the contrast between Plan and No Plan.

'Insoluble Problem of Abundance'

Has all the modern capitalist technique of 'planning', carried forward now with conscious competitive anxiety to meet the 'challenge' of the demonstrated success and superior pace of advance of socialist planning, succeeded in solving the basic capitalist problem of poverty in the midst of plenty? This problem, so far from disappearing, has become intensified in our era with every advance of technology and productive power. This contrast is not only glaring between the wealthiest most advanced imperialist countries and the desperate hunger of the vast majority of the population of the capitalist world still held in the grip of colonial economic exploitation. The contrast is repeated within the most advanced industrial countries. Listen to President Kennedy's Farm Message to Congress in January of this year, reported by *The Times* (February 1, 1962) under the heading 'U.S. Insoluble Problem of Abundance':

> WASHINGTON, January 31. President Kennedy sent a Farm Message to the Congress today, his first major attempt to tackle the apparently insoluble problem of abundance. . . . It will be difficult to withdraw a lot of land permanently out of cultivation. . . . Yet this is what President Kennedy proposes to do. . . . Farmers would be paid for land taken out of production.

Back to the old Roosevelt New Deal programme of subsidies for not raising hogs. 'Planning'—for Restriction.

Poverty in the Midst of Plenty

Of course in this sphere the capitalist advocates can still for the

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moment enjoy their laugh; for socialism is still grappling with heavy problems to increase agricultural production. Indeed, an ironic moment has been reached in which the otherwise discomforted champions of advanced American capitalism can offer as a last plea: 'Admittedly we cannot compete any longer in the highest levels of scientific and technological achievement; but our agriculture is wonderful'. This much 'consolation' may be enjoyed by them while it lasts. But at least the socialist peoples are grappling with a rational and intelligent problem how to increase agricultural production in order to provide more for everybody. They are not struggling with how to decrease agricultural production and take land out of cultivation. Are there then no hungry mouths in the United States (let alone the rest of the capitalist world)? Let President Kennedy himself answer. Barely over a year ago President Kennedy in his presidential electoral campaign came out with the slogan: 'Seventeen million Americans go to bed hungry every night'. Seventeen million hungry mouths in the United States. And the answer of President Kennedy? To cut down food production. There is a 'surplus'. Not in relation to need. But in relation to demand, to economic demand, the only demand capitalism can recognise. The 'demand' of the millionaire playboy to turn a productive farm into a dude ranch or provide a fifth Cadillac for his latest wife is more effective for capitalism than the hunger of an unemployed Virginia miner or a Southern negro. Theirs is only need, to be met at best with a precarious inadequate dole, not 'effective economic demand'. The 'surplus' is 'unsaleable'.

'Planning' for the Arms Race

President Kennedy has combined the 'planning' recipes of both his predecessors. He has 'planned' for restriction, as Roosevelt did. He has 'planned' for an unprecedented arms race, as Hitler did. The present United States arms budget makes Hitler's look like a toy soldier's outfit. When Hitler's peace-time arms budget was rumoured to have reached £1,000 million a gasp went round the world. The latest U.S. arms budget provides for 52·7 billion dollars direct military expenditure, or £18,800 million excluding international 'aid', mainly military, and 'space' expenditure, also mainly military, which would bring the total up to 58 billion dollars or £20,700 million. Already in his first year of office President Kennedy increased arms expenditure by six billion dollars or £2,143 million. His new budget estimate presented in January provides for

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a further increase of government expenditure to a record total of 90·5 billion dollars or £33,000 million, representing an increase by 10·9 billion dollars or £3,820 million. No wonder President Kennedy in his Economic Message in January presenting the budget could proudly proclaim : 'The momentum of our economy has been restored', and add: 'Almost four-fifths of this 92·5 billion dollar expenditure represents costs associated with our current national security and past wars'. As Walter Lippmann pointed out in commenting on this budget, the increase in government expenditure in the modern era, relative to output, has not been in other spheres or the social services, but in arms expenditure:

> Except for the spectacular rise in the spending for national security, there has been no radical increase in the burden of government spending during the past twenty years. In 1939 government spending (minus defence) amounted to 13·4 per cent of the gross national product. In 1960 it was 12·3 per cent.

Is this the kind of 'planning' into which the General Council now wishes to enter?

'Planning' for the Offensive on Workers' Standards

What is the lesson for Britain? It should be crystal clear that the purpose of the National Economic Development Council, with its talk of 'planning', is not to plan for the benefit of the people. Capitalism can only 'plan' in the interests of the monopolies. Capitalism can 'plan' restriction in the interests of the monopolies. Capitalism can 'plan' the arms race and the cold war, with accompanying inflationary shots in the arms and deficits and waste, in the interests of the monopolies. Capitalism can 'plan' the offensive on the workers' standards ('a national wages policy', 'sacrifices all round', 'restraint', a 'pause') in the interests of the monopolies, to pay for the waste and deficits and cold war and maintain the inflated profits. On the very day on which the Prime Minister was refusing even the face-saving sop of £4 million begged for by the rail union leaders (the difference between the 3 per cent increase, representing £9 million, and the 4 per cent, representing £13 million), Courtaulds was gaily announcing a free gift of £40 million and an increase of dividends to 15 per cent for its shareholders—no fear of inflation here or a rise in personal incomes for those adding nothing to production.

Their 'Plan'—and Ours

It was not unfitting, in view of the real purpose of the economies,

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that in his amateur theatricals with the rail union leaders the Prime Minister invoked Paschendaele. Unfortunately there was no rail union leader there with the guts to say to him: 'Yes, that was another bloody mess you lot got us into'; or to remind him, when he spoke of the equality of sacrifice at the front, of the Report of the Committee on War Wealth Increases published after the war, recording the gigantic fortunes made by the profiteers during the first world war. There is still too much of the spirit of the old Amalgamated Society of Railway *Servants* among some of the present leaders, when the formation of the National Union of Railwaymen was intended to have changed all that. The Government and the employers are getting away with murder. Step by step, with cunningly casual-seeming strategy, they are slipping across that 'national wages policy' of limitation which through all these years it has been their endeavour—hitherto vainly—to establish. The time to fight is now. The response of the underground railmen on January 27 and of the engineers on February 5, to be repeated on March 5, has shown the spirit and the will wherever there is organised united leadership, in the former case on a district scale, and in the latter case on a national scale. Against the 'plan' of the Government, through N.E.D.C., to disarm the unions and lower standards, needs to be set the counter-plan of the combined strength of the trade union and labour movement—the plan of the working class for united action.

February 19, 1962 R.P.D.

FORTY YEARS AGO

The economic fatalism sometimes attributed to Socialists is nothing to the economic fatalism of the commercial and political pundits, where the sufferings of the poor are concerned. Compared with them the Socialist faith at its most rigid is a liberating reassertion of human energy. The enemy of production is not a vague impersonal abstraction, as unassailable as the weather. It is a visible personal force that can be fought against and overthrown. The obstacle to production today is the system of capitalist ownership. Once upon a time Capitalism stimulated production: today it is a hindrance to it. Let that fact be realised, and the whole current defence of Capitalism as a system of production becomes as obsolete as the old-time defence of Capitalism as competition, when it has long since passed into trusts and combines, or as private property, when nine-tenths of the nation no longer has any.

('Notes of the Month', *Labour Monthly*, March, 1922.)

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Accursed War!

Woodcut by ANDREA GOMEZ, Mexico
(*March 8 is International Women's Day*)

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Problems of Trade Unionism in the Sixties

WAGES AND THE PLANNING COUNCIL

E. J. Hill

General Secretary of the United Society of Boilermakers, Shipbuilders and Structural Workers.

THE Trades Union Congress after many months of discussions have now decided to join the National Economic Development Council by a vote of 21 to 8, and had it not been for the wage pause they would have conceded this before. The delay caused by the wage pause has at least been helpful, as it has enabled the T.U.C. to get some idea of what the intention of the Chancellor was, and is.

The Chancellor has made it clear in the White Paper, *Incomes Policy: The Next Step*,* that he intends to control wage advances in the future. He suggests that wage increases in the next phase, that is the period following March 31, should not exceed 2 to 2½ per cent; but he also says that in many cases there might not be justification for any increase at all. How the Chancellor can reconcile these ideas is difficult to understand, having regard to wage increases that have already been paid and increases that have already been offered which are in excess of the 2 to 2½ per cent that he has quoted. If the engineering and shipbuilding industries which are responsible for a large percentage of our exports are among the industries to be sacrificed in this wage cycle, then large-scale trouble lies ahead. The engineering and shipbuilding workers were the victims of the last wage cycle and we have no intention of playing a similar rôle on this occasion.

It is suggested that the arguments that have been used in the past to justify wage increases ought not to be given the same weight as hitherto, such as increased cost of living, and profits or productivity in a particular industry. The Chancellor obviously agrees that the result of increased productivity and profits should be the property of the employing classes; and as we can no longer argue an increase in cost of living, he is also agreeing to, or at least encouraging, further increases in the price of commodities to help some of his surtax friends who are having difficulty in making ends meet despite their £83 million nest egg.

*(Cmnd. 1626).

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The Chancellor talks glibly about arbitration; he says that in a wide range of employments arrangements exist whereby differences which are not settled by negotiation can be referred by agreement to independent arbitration. Who can have faith in arbitration when he himself vetoes democratic decisions given by such courts and becomes the arbiter, like a first-class totalitarian?

The government by its action has enslaved the trade union movement and destroyed a fundamental principle of our democratic institution. The trade unions were freer one hundred years ago than they are today, and it is doubtful whether the T.U.C. still qualify to be members of the International Free Trade Union Movement.

Out of fifteen paragraphs in the White Paper only one paragraph deals with profits and dividends. In this the Chancellor merely appeals to his *rentier* friends to co-operate in the same way as he did on July 25, 1961. To impose conditions on one section of the community and merely to appeal for co-operation from the other sections is immoral in the extreme; and it will never be tolerated by the rank and file of the trade union movement in this country.

The government has abrogated the most cherished freedom enjoyed by workers in a free democracy; they have denied them the right to sell their labour in a free market. Herr Hitler could not have done a better job. Robin Hood robbed the rich to give to the poor, and this was commendable to the starving masses in the days in which he lived; but however commendable it may have been, it was still wrong. Selwyn Lloyd is the modern Robin Hood, but he takes from the poor to give to the rich. It is a most pernicious form of robbery; for he has robbed the unborn of nourishment, young kiddies of their milk and sweetmeats, and caused anguish to the parents. Selwyn Lloyd has used his political power to abrogate industrial decisions contracted by the most democratic machinery. To use political power in this way is a most unforgivable sin in this modern age; you can only liken it to a professional boxer stealing from a kid's money-box.

Whilst the T.U.C. have decided to join the National Economic Development Council, it should be made clear that they have no power to deal with wages, for wage negotiations are the entire property of the affiliated Unions; and as the Chief Official of the Boilermakers' Society, I can give an assurance that we have no intention of giving up that right. This can be safely said of other affiliated organisations. The T.U.C. have indicated this to the

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Chancellor; and therefore there can be no misgivings on this matter. Should he bring any pressure on wages he will be rebuffed; and that will be the end of the Economic Council so far as the T.U.C. is concerned.

The T.U.C. are not opposed to economic planning; on the contrary they are in favour of such planning, and have said so on many occasions. But they also recognise that you cannot have economic planning without physical controls, and it is this phase of planning that is obnoxious to a Tory Government.

The Tory Government have depended too much on financial controls, and consequently the bank rate has gone up and down almost as often as Tower Bridge. These bank rate fluctuations have been more responsible for stagnating expansion than any other feature; physical controls would have been much more serviceable to our economy. If an inflationary tendency develops through over-consumption at home, surely it is easier to ration consumption at home in favour of the export market; and apart from the fact that it is easier, it is also more equitable.

This country has not run into economic difficulties because of wage claims. On the contrary, it has run into difficulties through bad government.

In 1959 the Tories said 'we have never had it so good'. At that time our national reserves stood at £1,200,000,000, which was very good having regard to our post-war difficulties. Inside of two years we had to borrow £700,000,000 to balance our payments, and if we add to this the loss from our national reserves we find that the Tory Government have dissipated over a thousand million pounds in less than two years.

A government that dissipates over a thousand million pounds in such a short time when economies abroad are still buoyant is unfit to govern.

Workers who were persuaded to vote Tory in the last election, must feel sorry for themselves now. Perhaps they will remember their experience at the next General Election and help to return a Labour Government who will manage this country without the aid of a National Economic Development Council.

(Mr. Robert Willis (London Typographical Society) wrote 'The T.U.C. and Planning in January, and Mr. John Newton (Tailors & Garment Workers) contributes his view in April.)

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UNITE AND FIGHT

Peter Kerrigan

LAST summer, faced with the recurring crises which have attended Tory Government policy over the years the Government introduced new taxes and forced prices up by a shilling in the pound. At the same time Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, the Chancellor, introduced the pay pause to prevent wages catching up. He accompanied this by wrecking existing negotiating and arbitration machinery, refusing to pay the salary increase agreed for teachers, and stopping increases for other sections including postal workers and civil servants.

In response we had the revolt of the teachers, the work to rule of post office workers, and post office engineers, and the threat of similar action by the civil servants. Two sections of workers made a considerable dent in the pay pause. The leaders at London Airport by strike action forced a greater increase than the award which the Government had stopped. Workers in electricity supply industry, by threat of strike action, also secured a substantial wage rise.

Well over six million workers have wage claims in, or pending, with railwaymen, shipbuilding and engineering workers, miners, dockers and some sections of transport workers already in the front line or moving into it.

For months the Government has been endeavouring to secure cooperation by the Trades Union Congress General Council in its National Economic Development Council; and at the end of January by a majority vote of 21 to 8 the General Council of the T.U.C. agreed to join. Immediately afterwards on February 2 Mr. Selwyn Lloyd issued his plan to follow the wage freeze, officially due to terminate on March 31, in the form of a White Paper (Cmnd. 1626), *Incomes Policy : The Next Step*.

This is one of the most provocative and amazing documents ever to be submitted as a guide to wage and salary negotiations. It categorically rejects all the main arguments advanced by union negotiators in support of wage increases.

For example, increases in the cost of living, or higher profits and the bosses' ability to pay, cannot be accepted as a sound basis for wage or salary rises. Comparability with levels or trends in other employment are also out, so the railwaymen's famous case based on the Guillebaud Committee recommendations, which were accepted by the present Prime Minister at the time, are no longer valid either

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for railwaymen, post office workers, civil service or local government employees, according to his government spokesman. In any case no increases should go above 2 to 2½ per cent, which is the estimated growth of productivity this year; and 'in many cases there may indeed be no justification at present for any increase at all'.

One may well ask what kind of situation would qualify for an increase? The answer is given on page four:

> an increase could be justified as part of an agreement under which those concerned made a direct contribution by accepting more exacting work, or more onerous conditions, or by a renunciation of restrictive practices, to an increase of productivity, and a reduction of costs.

Now we know what qualifies you for a rise of sixpence in the pound.

For the trade union movement to accept, or fail to fight, this policy until it is completely defeated, would mean not only agreeing to lower living standards, but to putting the trade union movement permanently in chains. It would be a deadly blow at trade union organisation and could have a demoralising effect on membership.

The tragedy is that both the Labour leadership and the right-wing of the T.U.C. accept the basic line of the government.

In the Parliamentary debate on industrial relations on January 29, the chief Labour spokesman, Mr. Ray Gunter, himself chairman of one of the railway unions, made this clear. He said:

> What is the end the Government desire? They desire restraint. We understand that. We are not fools. When we are told we are spending more than we are earning, we understand it.

Later during a Tory M.P.'s speech, Mr. Gunter intervened to underline the point:

> I tried to make it clear that the end which the Government had in mind commanded my support. It is the stupidity of their means that I deplore.

Now the end the Government have in mind is clear. It is to peg wages, to put a ceiling of 2½ per cent on any rises that are given while its policy pushes up prices, and to permit profits to rise with absolutely no control over the disbursement of these profits. All the so-called planning to be considered by the Government's National Economic Development Council will be subsidiary to the interests of British capitalism and, in particular, monopoly capitalism. When these people talk about the interests of the nation it is their profits now and in the future which they have in mind.

On February 8 eleven names were announced by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, who with Erroll, President of the Board of Trade and Mr. J. H. Hare, Minister of Labour, together with six T.U.C. nominees

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will comprise the twenty members of 'Ned', the so-called National Economic Development Council. An examination of the list makes clear the character of the Council. Dr. Beeching of the railways and Lord Robens of the National Coal Board will have as colleagues the President of the Federation of British Industries; the managing director of Dunlop Rubber Co.; the chairman of Swan Hunters, shipbuilders; the managing director of Laings, the builders; a director of Ferranti; the chairman of Boots Pure Drug Co.; aided by Sir Oliver Franks, former Ambassador to the U.S.A.; a professor of Economics; and an ex-steel boss, Sir Robert Stone. This is the group with whom the T.U.C. representatives are to co-operate. It does not need any great powers of perception to predict that an important aspect of its work will be to involve the trade unions in support for the line of the government statement on *Income Policy*, particularly the aspects concerned with getting the workers to accept 'more exacting work, or more onerous conditions'.

What should be done in this situation? First we need to mobilise the united strength of the trade union and labour movement against this attack. There is no doubt the workers are prepared to fight, and there is equally no dubiety about their power once they move into action. London's underground workers paralysed the capital's transport system by their 24-hour strike on January 28. On February 5, three million shipbuilding and engineering workers stopped every shipyard and nearly every engineering establishment from John O'Groats to Lands End. These actions, however significant, are but the preliminary skirmishes.

Every trade union is affected by the policy. For that reason, it is urgently necessary for the unions to get together to consider joint action. Similarly, whatever section gets involved in a struggle, whether it be the railwaymen, engineers, miners, dockers or transport workers, should instantly receive the maximum support of all other trade unions and the labour movement as a whole. Following Lord Robens' rejection of the miners' very modest wage demands, they have decided to hold a coalfield conference and to approach the T.U.C. General Council.

The first genuine step towards mobilising support for the miners which the General Council can take will be to reverse immediately its majority decision and withdraw from the National Economic Development Council. Only such an action will inspire any confidence in them doing the job which they should. Equally there is a strong case for the engineers, now they have decided for a further

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one-day strike and a ballot on a general stoppage, to contact railwaymen, miners, and transport workers, who are all confronted with the same problem. This time it is not only the employers who have to be faced. It is the government, whether they are dictating the answers being made by the Chairmen of the Railway Executive and Coal Board, or lining up behind the backwoodsmen who comprise the leadership of the shipbuilding and engineering employers.

One of the features of the February 5 stoppage was that thousands applied for membership, as reported by the engineering unions. In critical times like these many thousands of workers become aware of the need to belong to a trade union. It is essential that their trust should not be betrayed.

The capitalist press, radio, television and politicians will actively campaign to confuse the issues. In particular, they will try and adversely influence the strike ballot of the engineering unions.

It is essential for the greatest possible pressure to be exerted on the parliamentary Labour Party to ensure they take up the fight in Parliament and end collaboration with the Tory Government. We should remember also the other forces which can be brought into motion behind the unions. At present the Co-operative movement is fighting to maintain its position in face of great pressure from the multiples and monopolies. In the past the Co-ops. locally and nationally have rendered great aid to trade unions like the miners, engineers, dockers and others. Never was the need greater than today. A victory for the unions in this fight will be a major success in the struggle of the Co-ops.

A major aspect of this struggle is the need for greatly increased public activity at the factories on the jobs and in the pits. A most invaluable instrument which the movement has is the *Daily Worker*. One has only to consider the job it did leading up to the stoppage on February 5, and then the magnificent reporting and pictures on February 6, when every other newspaper was trying to minimise the strike, to appreciate its rôle. It is this daily paper and organs like *Labour Monthly* which are such important weapons in the armoury of the British working class.

A great challenge has arisen. It has to be met by a united fight embracing every progressive, every honest trade unionist, Labour man and Co-operator: in other words, the main fighting force of the mighty British working class and its natural allies, the professional and salaried workers, many of whom have surprised everyone by their militancy, understanding and courage.

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IS IT THE END OF THE LINE?

Les Bates*

President, Swindon District Committee of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

WHAT a picture of capitalist so-called 'planning', 'efficiency' and 'development' is presented when it comes to the Tory treatment of the nationalised industries. Concern for national interests would demand a national fuel policy and a national integrated transport system, for a start. Planning and efficiency? Ask the miners about the newly-sunk pits closed in the interest of efficiency; and what happens to the industry's production target if Oil says no. Development? Ask the railwaymen what has happened to railways as a national service, with lines closed and railshops closing, with electrification held up if Oil says no. Planning a low wages policy is all the capitalist 'national planners' excel at.

Dr. Beeching, the British Transport chief, has announced that there are too many workers in the railshops for the work available and many are to be sacked—for example, 600 down to go from Swindon railshop alone, as a start. From this it is a short step to declaring that there are too many railshops for the work available. If anyone doubts that the Tories would leave some of them derelict I would remind them of what they did to Jarrow shipyards between the wars. Take the railway town of Swindon. Whilst new factories have been built in the district, many of the workers to staff them have been attracted from London under an 'overspill' arrangement and also from other industrial centres by the offer of a council house. Therefore there are now few jobs vacant. Thousands of railway workers on the dole can quickly turn Swindon from 'Boom Town' into 'Gloom Town'. The earnings in Swindon factories as a whole, though higher than in the railshops, are not as high as in many industrial centres. For example, two bitter unsuccessful strikes have been fought at Pressed Steel in an attempt to win parity with the branch of the firm at Oxford, only 30 miles away. A large 'pool' of unemployed could be used as a lever to keep earnings in the town at the present level or even depress them. Therefore a basis for unity exists between all types of worker to save the railshops.

*Mr. Bates is a member of the Works Committee of the huge railshop at Swindon, which builds and repairs locomotives, wagons, coaches, etc.

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A few years ago when Swindon railshop men were faced with the prospect of the sack, the increasing amount of work that was being given by the Tory government to its friends in 'private enterprise' could be blamed for the railshops plight. As the nationalised railshops were prevented by law from tendering for private contracts, the demand that the manufacture of equipment for the railways should be left to the nationalised railshops was, and still is, plain justice. Let the 'private enterprise' firms use their boasted enterprise and get orders elsewhere; and if the nationalised railshops are as inefficient as is alleged in some quarters, why the need for a law to protect private, and therefore by implication, efficient firms from nationalised competitors? Political means for industrial ends once more? In spite of the large orders given to private firms, enough work was placed in the Swindon factory to avoid large-scale sacking. 'Wastage', including men attracted by the higher earnings being obtained in the new factories in the district, has been relied on by the management to reduce the number employed from 12,000 to 8,000. A short 'sit-down' over the issue of work being transferred from the factory probably influenced the position.

The situation is now more serious, for it is not just the railshops, but the railways as a public service which the Tories are obviously set on destroying in the interests of Big Business. The management recently handed our Works' Committee a list of 300 trains which were to be discontinued in the Bristol Division after March, 1962. Considerately at the same time they also supplied a time table of buses which might alleviate the inconvenience caused to their ex-passengers. If this pattern of behaviour is carried out in all regions along with the closing of branch lines, it can only mean that the government intends to reduce the network of railways to a few threads of main lines. On these, packed passenger trains would be highly profitable. As no more heavy diesels are to be built, Dr. Beeching must consider he has enough heavy locomotives to cover the term of his engagement of five years, on this limited system. This may be true but it will mean running the guts out of them. So what happens after that? Expenses are to be cut whilst the doctor is in charge. But what is going to happen in five years' time? Who is going to solve the problem of replacements in five years' time? What capitalist expert planning.

The de-nationalisation of the profitable road section of transport and the granting of orders to private firms are blatant actions against

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the interests of the general public and railworkers and to the advantage of the big capitalists. Other forms of discrimination are not quite so well understood. For example, I have never accepted the idea that it was necessary to have an intermediate stage between steam and electricity in the modernisation of our railways, during which diesels must be used. In support of the idea we were told that diesels were quick, easy and comparatively cheap to build; but now the story is reversed. No more large diesels are to be built because they are too dear. In my opinion the truth was that, dear or cheap, the locos had to burn oil—the Oil Lobby insisted.

Just before the introduction of diesels the front end of all Castle class steam locos on the Western Region had been re-built; and, in my opinion, these could have seen us through until the region could have been electrified. There would then have been no break in the use of Britain's only remaining raw material which is plentiful—coal. The haste to be consuming the oil obtained by the merciless exploitation of the workers in the Middle East, became almost farcical. We had the spectacle of trains being attached to steam locos to warm the carriages before they were hauled away by diesels, there being no efficient heating system with the latter. It was satirically rumoured that production of foot-warmers was to re-start so that the future was bright for the 'tin bashers' if for no-one else.

It is time to stop the nationalised industries from being used as the butt of Oil and Road Transport Big Business. The miners and railworkers ought to make common cause to step the pit closures and the cuts in rail services. They must force the government, by industrial action if necessary, to adopt a national fuel policy and an integrated transport system in which air, road and rail each plays its appropriate part. Such a system is the policy of the Trades Union Congress and therefore all trade unionists should rally in support. The electrification of the railways should be proceeded with immediately, thus using coal as their source of power.

The sooner the rank and file trade unionists start demanding the foregoing, by resolution, mass demonstrations and lobbying executive committees, M.P.'s, and Ministries the sooner it will become a reality. Meanwhile, so far as the railways are concerned, the workers in the various factories and depots need to get together to discuss the form of immediate action. I suggest the basis of discussion should be: 'Not a worker sacked until comparable alternative work is provided'.

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NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: WHAT I THINK

Bertrand Russell, O.M., F.R.S.

[*Following upon the Notes of the Month, 'Peace and Power', last October which dealt with Soviet tests, Professor J. D. Bernal, F.R.S., wrote 'Faith in Man's Future' in January, about Bertrand Russell's book* Has Man a Future? *We had already asked Bertrand Russell previously if he would like to comment; he replied, on January 2: 'I was most interested to read the section of the Editorial Notes which referred to me, and if it is not now too late, I should like to write a reply. As you know, I wholeheartedly disagree with your arguments concerning Soviet nuclear weapons and Soviet nuclear tests, and I should welcome the opportunity to make my views on this subject known to readers of* Labour Monthly'. *We accordingly invited him to make his contribution to discussion, which we now print. In next month's issue the Reverend Canon L. John Collins will be making some points in regard to the 18-Nations Conference. —Ed.*, L.M.]

THERE are often times when I find it difficult to talk or write further. I feel that I can no longer bear to argue or seek to persuade men. I feel that I must act and argue by example. It seems to me to require a colossal failure of imagination to put this or that political end before the continued existence of our species, yet that is what men and women are doing.

When the airplane first was adapted for destruction, people believed that the conscience of man would not tolerate the dropping of explosives from the sky. The advent of T.N.T. bombs was met with similar protestation and with like conviction that human beings would revolt against such barbarity. Nonetheless, the bombing of defenceless civilians became accepted as did the generalised bombing of non-military targets. It all became part of 'normal warfare'. This flexibility of conscience and evidence of man's ability to adapt was followed by saturation bombing of cities. The block-buster and the V.2 rocket were greeted with horror and men were certain that civilised human beings would cry 'halt!'

When 20,000 tons of T.N.T. fell upon Hiroshima it was believed that this final outrage, this unbelievable weapon, would mean an

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end to war for no one could again contemplate it. The Hydrogen bomb was called the 'Super-Bomb'. It was the worst of the bombs.

This evolution covers a period of some thirty years, an infinitesimal fraction of man's experience and a speck on the map of geological time. The difference between the pious outcry of 1930 and the anguished cry of today is that the objective conditions which give rise to them are different in order. It has been a continuum; but we are faced with a difference in kind so profound that the mental equipment suitable for the world of 1930 would not suit an amoeba in 1962. Who seriously could believe thirty years ago that our world would be poised on a hair-trigger within the lives of most then living, The nuclear stockpiles of East and West provide an average of 500 tons of T.N.T. for every single human being on the planet. The planet is covered with rocket bases and H-bombers patrol the skies continually. The warning systems measure in minutes and the radar on which they rely is so technically faulty in application that it cannot distinguish natural phenomena from missiles.

It is perfectly clear that nuclear war is a matter of statistical near certainty if present policies persist. The number of variables are such that with every day that passes the probability of war increases. What then can sane men do? Our difficulty lies not so much in the apathy of our fellows but in the vast paralysis which possesses them. People feel helpless and overwhelmed by the enormity of the evil. They see themselves as unable to affect events, even such as those that determine whether their children shall live or their countries and cultures survive for some posterity.

I say with all the emphasis I can muster, that the men of power who are prepared to base 'security' on the readiness and the willingness to incinerate men in their hundreds of millions are global butchers. I am indifferent to the ideology which provides the language in which they couch their cruelty. It is a lie and an obscenity to pretend that such justifications change the plain fact of mass murder in heart, in plan, and in action. The recent resumption of atmospheric tests by the Soviet Union will cost four million lives through this and future generations. Cancer and genetic damage are the result. Put aside the fact, for the moment, that the resumption of tests has heightened the conflict. Examine solely the brute facts. Consider the meaning of this decision. I am not prepared to equivocate on this nor can I honestly respect men who do. I am fed

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up beyond the power of words to express, with the inhumanity of Governments.

What do words mean if Mr. Khrushchov can say that the resumption of tests would be a criminal act, such as to brand the perpetrator before the conscience of the world as an enemy of mankind? What can we feel when the West invoke a vocabulary of moral judgment and embrace the virtues in condemning Soviet resumption while they contemplate the explosion of their own bombs? I do not believe this is a decent way to live.

The responsibility of men in power is to take risks with their political lives and not to guarantee the death of mankind. The absolute duty of sane men and women is to rise up, to join together in an international movement of resistance, to cease acquiescence in policy and practice which betrays everything worthwhile in the human experiment.

UNLAWFUL

On June 2, 1817, Andrew McKinley was tried on a charge of administering an unlawful oath at secret meetings in Glasgow, during November and December, 1816, and January and February, 1817. This was the oath: 'In the awful presence of God, I do voluntarily swear that I will persevere in my endeavouring to form a brotherhood of affection among Britons of every description who are considered worthy of confidence, and that I will persevere in any endeavours to obtain for all the people in Great Britain and Ireland, not disqualified by any crimes or insanity, the elective franchise, at the age of twenty-one, with free and equal representation, and annual parliaments; and that I will support the same to the utmost of my power, either by moral or physical strength, as the case may require: and I do further swear that neither hopes, fears, rewards, or punishments shall induce me to inform on, or give evidence against, any member or members, collectively or individually, for any act or expression done or made, in or out, in this or similar societies, under the punishment of death, to be inflicted on me by any member or members of such societies. So help me God, and keep me steadfast.'

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AFRICA AND THE COMMON MARKET

P. Tlalé

CURRENT discussion on the European Common Market has missed what lies at the root of the Common Market projects—as indeed of all previous schemes for West European unity: it is the aim of exploiting the vast resources of the African continent. The explicit assumption of the Common Market is that this last stronghold of European colonialism will continue to remain the basis for West Europe's economic prosperity and progress.

The Government's decision to enter is through the fear that a major part of ex-colonial Africa, which is now being 'associated' with the European Economic Community, will become a closed area and so weaken further the relative position of British imperialism in Africa. The integration of the economies of the former African colonies into the Common Market through a system of 'association' is now the method being adopted by the European imperialists to perpetuate their economic privileges in the newly-liberated countries. The Common Market is the instrument by which they hope *collectively* to hold unchanged the régimes of trade and investment developed in the era of open colonial rule in Africa. Hence they intend to make impossible all those economic transformations necessary to give substance to the newly-won independence of the African people. It is the essence of Neo-colonialism.

The main initiative for 'associating' Africa when the Rome Treaty was being negotiated in 1957 came from France; faced then with a rapidly disintegrating colonial empire, the French colonialists realised that their influence in Africa could only be maintained if the African colonies were bound to a vaster, more viable and resourceful framework of trade and investment than that capable of being provided by France alone. They therefore adopted the banner of European unity as a means for mobilising the resources and markets of 'Little Europe', and in particular of West Germany, for the purpose of tying the economies of the African colonies more firmly to those of France and the Common Market.

For West German capitalism it has meant renewed opportunity. West German monopolies, banks and trusts have been particularly quick in joining and even sponsoring interlocking investment *consortia* among enterprises in the E.E.C. to exploit the resources of the

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African association territories, swamping the former French colonies with economic missions and offers of 'aid', and gaining new openings for capital investment and penetration. Further, West Germany entered into bilateral economic agreements with a number of new African states and is heavily involved in the 'economic investment' programme of the Common Market's Development Fund.

The colonialism of the Common Market and its aims to hold untrammelled the African basis of 'Little Europe's' prosperity is clearly seen in the terms of the African 'association' so laboriously worked into the Rome Treaty and its accompanying five-year Convention. The Treaty speaks of the declared intention of the European Six 'to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and the overseas territories' and accordingly goes on to incorporate the then French, Dutch and Belgian empires into the E.E.C. without consulting the peoples of the colonies concerned. The Rome Treaty distinguished between two groups of 'associated' territories. The so-called overseas departments of France—Algeria, Guadeloupe, Martinique and Reunion—were treated as coming within the same provisions as applied to France (with certain important exceptions relating to social insurance, conditions, trade union rights, etc., which were excluded) by extending to all the six member countries in Europe the traditional colonial tariff privileges enjoyed by France.

The second group is of colonies proper, territories with which France, Belgium, Italy and Holland 'maintain special relations'. Of the twenty-four colonies in this group, eighteen with a population of over 53 million are in Africa. If Algeria is added to this group, well over half of the African land surface will have thus been 'associated' in the Common Market. Here again provisions on social and labour policy are excluded. The five-year Convention required this group of colonies to reduce import tariffs on goods coming from the E.E.C. to a level at least equal to the preferential custom duties for the metropolitan country directly concerned, whilst getting preferential tariffs on their raw material and agricultural exports. In this way the old system of colonial tariff privileges is generalised for all the Common Market countries, whilst there is the mutual obligation on the Six and the colonies to remove other restrictions on their trade with each other. Secondly, the freedom available to metropolitan-based capitalist enterprises and monopolies to invest capital, set up subsidiaries and generally exploit the resources and labour of the colonies was extended to enterprises in all the Common Market countries. Thus West German capital can freely enter those colonies

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previously restricted to nationals and enterprises of rival imperialist countries. To this was added various guarantees against risks of nationalisation in the colonies. Finally, the Convention created a 'Development Fund' of $581 million out of which 'investment projects in the associated areas will be financed', with West Germany and France contributing $200 million each.

The Five-Year Convention expires this year, and some sixteen of the African associated territories became independent in 1960. (Guinea which became independent in 1958 dissolved her association with the Common Market.) Both these developments now require a re-negotiation of the African link-up with the E.E.C. In December last, official representatives from these African states were invited to Paris to consider a French proposal that the African 'association' should continue under the same terms and conditions.

Of the sixteen states only four refused to accept the French proposal—Togo, Mali, Congo (Leopoldville) and Somalia, and decided to re-negotiate their trade links with each of the European Six to gain a greater degree of autonomy in matters of tariff and trade policy. The other twelve states, apparently pre-occupied with short-term trade advantages and the illusion of 'aid' from the Development Fund, accepted. They even went further. They claimed that as 'founder-associates' they should receive more than preferential treatment from the E.E.C. should other (British) African territories become associated as a result of the British application to join the Common Market. The Common Market had clearly revealed itself as another imperialist force for disunity and disruption in the African independence movement.

This vast design to bind a major part of the African economy to that of the E.E.C. clearly carries considerable dangers for Britain. It provides the Common Market with the prospects of an exceptional rate of economic growth and prosperity based on the rich African resources and a considerable protected market effectively closed to its capitalist rivals. The exports of British-held Africa—the colonies and ex-colonies in the sterling area—will be seriously discriminated against in the markets of the European Six, so undermining their foreign exchange-earning capacity.

What possibly has impressed Britain most has been the seeming success of the Common Market colonialists in devising plans and policies to hold on to the economies of the former French West and Equatorial African colonies, despite their advance to

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political independence. The British cannot show the same. In his address to the E.E.C. Council of Ministers in October last, Mr. Edward Heath carefully outlined a case for the inclusion of the 'less developed and dependent states of the Commonwealth' in the Common Market. He recognised that 'some Commonwealth countries have expressed the opinion that the present arrangements for association in the Common Market are not appropriate for independent states', but hoped that these opinions might change. In essence the British plan to involve Britain's African colonies and ex-colonies in the Common Market is designed to preserve the imperial tariff preference system and at a stretch to share it with the six countries of the E.E.C. In return the United Kingdom government asks for unlimited market opportunities for the export products of the African sterling area region.

All this has the most far-reaching implications for the economies of Africa. Tying such unequal economies as those of Africa and West Europe in a concentrated customs and tariff preference system cannot but lead to increased backwardness and dependence of Africa. Already the economies of almost all African countries are intensely specialised, with what are virtually single crops. Commodity circulation is narrow and practically confined to foreign trade, which itself is of a special kind, and largely in the hands of metropolitan-based monopolies, which dominate the markets for native products, determine prices and wages, own and manage vast plantations and mines and hence expropriate virtually the whole of the economic surplus. One crucial factor promoting this kind of specialisation is the system of privileged colonial tariff and trade preferences, especially the French and British.

Will not this process of colonial specialisation and the resulting economic backwardness become more intensive in the associated territories linked, as they will be, by a uniform tariff and trade policy to the vaster and more powerful industrial complex of the Common Market? There can be no doubt about the answer. True, Article 133 of the Rome Treaty recognises that these territories may levy customs duties which 'correspond to the needs of their development'. But in practice this right is reduced to nothing; the tariffs imposed on the colonies were already quite inadequate to protect infant industries. Rather the Common Market with its enormous appetite for raw materials and protected markets will tend to freeze the economies of the associated territories into a strictly colonial frame-

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work, so rendering their hard-won independence as little more than a façade for the colonialism of the Common Market.

The Common Market monopolies are made stronger and more aggressive by their ability to mobilise vast sums of capital and by the assurances against nationalisation. The leading banks and monopolies in the E.E.C. have set up investment *consortia* to exploit the associated overseas territories. The Development Fund of $581 million is primarily to finance the development of 'infra-structure' projects—roads, railways, and communications, necessary to link the hinterland to the ports, so as to make investment more profitable. By the end of 1961, grants amounting to $250 million from the Fund for 221 projects, all in Africa, were authorised, over 185 covering infra-structure investments. For 1962, a further $330 million will be disbursed in Africa. The E.E.C. Council of Ministers have now approved an extension of the Fund's powers for the years after 1962 and are providing facilities for spending at a rate of $220 million a year from 1963.

Above all, the Common Market intensifies divisions in Africa. The link-up with the E.E.C. have made the various attempts of the former French colonies to create their own tariff and economic unions of little consequence. Politically, the Common Market has been an important factor encouraging disunity and rivalry among African states. Some of the states by having become dependent on contributions and trade outlets in the Common Market have been forced to tie their policies to those of the European colonialists. The inability of former French territories to agree to the participation of the Algerian Provisional Government at the recent Conference of African States in Lagos is a reflection of this.

The Third All-African Peoples Conference held in March, 1961, warned sharply against the dangers of the Common Market in its celebrated resolution on neo-colonialism. In his Budget address of last July, Dr. Nkrumah explained:

> those African states who have been inveigled into joining this union will continue to serve as protected overseas markets for the manufactured goods of their industrialised partners and the source of cheap raw materials.

Other leaders in Africa have denounced the Common Market.

As far back as 1915 Lenin wrote that 'a United States of Europe under capitalism is tantamount to an agreement to divide up the colonies'. Today, the slogan of European unity is again being resurrected to secure the collective power of European colonialism.

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CUBA TRAVEL NOTES

D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

[*Mr. Pritt has recently returned from a visit to Cuba as a member of a British delegation to that country.*—Ed., L.M.]

WE arrived late in the evening, and were driven into Havana in the enormous 'aircraft-carrier' American limousines which had been poured into Havana shortly before the revolution by the surplus-ridden United States automobile industry. These cars had good radios, and all the way into the city I listened to Fidel Castro, speaking very clear Spanish (and coming through very clearly) in a long speech to schoolchildren. He spoke with extreme simplicity, as he seems always to do (basing himself on the assumption that his audience is intelligent but slow and simple in thought); and the content of his speech was very straightforward and simple, to the effect that a *good* revolutionary of any age-group was the one who worked best and hardest. I got the impression already, from the speech and from posters and streamers and slogans, that there was an electrifying revolutionary *élan* everywhere.

(*Afterwards, when I met the Deputy Prime Minister, Che Guevara, he told us that he thought the success already achieved, and the overwhelming popular support being given to the leadership, would ensure that this* élan *would not die down for a long time.—D.N.P.*)

I noted everywhere the spontaneous easy-going relations on which everyone seems to stand with everyone—both Cubans among themselves and Cubans with strangers. It seems impossible not to smile at people you meet; and it is certainly impossible for them not to smile back. There is no tendency among Cubans to think we might be 'Yanquis'; either there are so many other things we might be, say Czechs, or they do not expect to see any Yanquis, or they know that anyone who *is* a Yanqui must be all right, for otherwise he would not be there. Nearly all the Yanquis went long ago, with perhaps as many as 100,000 Cuban bourgeois.

January 20. I was awakened at 12.15 a.m. with the news that Fidel Castro was here in the hotel, and would receive the British delegation. After he had dealt with some other people he received the whole six of those delegates who were still in Cuba, informally

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at a table in the dining room of the Hotel Havana Riviera. It went on until about 3 a.m. I found Castro youthful—he is 36 years old—lively, confident, enthusiastic; I think that, if one met him without any knowledge of his remarkable history and achievements, one would still be greatly impressed. When he talks about anything that is of particular interest to him, *e.g.*, education, he talks—although without raising his voice—as if he were addressing an emotional appeal to a public meeting. He shows a real and genuine *bonhomie* and informal ease and friendliness. There is nothing boastful about either his manner or his speech, beyond a legitimate pride in the past achievements and the future intentions of revolutionary Cuba.

He is rather heavily built, about 5 ft. 7 or 8 in. tall, with a clear complexion and a short black beard. He gave not the slightest impression, during the two and a half hours we were with him, at the end of a very long day, and with another long day ahead of him, of strain or fatigue, of any lack of interest in us and our (not always important) questions, or of any desire to bring the proceedings to an end. We saw from quite a few incidents that he is willing to be accosted by any citizen, to talk to him or her, and even to give his autograph.

The interview was the most informal proceeding imaginable; there were present the six British delegates, a Costa Rican, and the Cuban ambassador to Ecuador, Dr. Corona, who had been taking a fatherly interest in our delegation at all stages, and had in fact succeeded in arranging the meeting. We sat round a table, whilst Castro drank tea and we drank coffee; there was no outward sign of any security measures, although there were several ways for people to find their way into the dining room.

The form of the interview was almost entirely 'Question and Answer'; the only 'opening statement' from Castro was in the nature of a small apology for not having been able to receive us a week or so earlier, when our delegation had been larger; he had had, as he explained and indeed we well knew, innumerable delegations to receive, often large ones; and some of them had been especially important, at this period of the Punta del Este meeting of the Organisation of American States and of the General Assembly of the people of Cuba to be held on February 4, since they came from the many Latin American countries.

He then passed to our questions; he treated the questions and the questioners as if they were all important (which did not seem to me

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to be the case so far as the questions were concerned). He answered fully, frankly and clearly, often at considerable length but never 'dodging'. He speaks English pretty well with a Cuban but not an American accent, but did not understand much of what the questioners said. Accordingly, we fell at once into the routine of my translating the questions into Spanish for him, and of his answering in English, with an occasional appeal to me for a word he did not know. This had the great advantage that his answers called for no translation.

I can best give the essence of what he said by grouping his answers into a number of statements, without giving the actual form of the questions.

1. Yes, we have made a good deal of progress already; but on the basis of what we have already done we ought to move very much faster in the future. Take education, for example; you have seen some very remarkable results, already achieved; but plainly, year by year, as more and more people get the accumulating advantages of this education, especially in the higher realms of technical and political education, there will be great acceleration, and many more people educated, with a 'snowball' effect. He grew really excited and enthusiastic about education, and gave a great many striking figures, mentioning that they are already giving 70,000 scholarships and incurring a great deal of other fruitful expenditure. He mentioned that some of the private schools recently taken over, which catered for the rich, were so luxurious that it has been found possible to accommodate adequately in their buildings up to four times as many pupils as they had previously held.

2. Yes, we have the support of the *peoples* of Latin America, but their governments in many cases do not support us and are not even in diplomatic relations with us.

3. Yes, I am quite clear that our revolution is a socialist one—not utopian socialist but Marxist-Leninist. And I am clear that nothing else will do; our people clearly want and insist on a revolutionary socialist Cuba. We regard 'representative democracy' (bourgeois or parliamentary democracy) as an unreality. To us, the true democracy is proletarian democracy; power in Cuba lies in the workers and peasants, who display their will in the vast popular assemblies. You must expect that the popular assembly we are to hold on February 4 will be twice as large as any previous one.

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(This was, I thought, the only point at which he indulged in anything like prophecy or boasting. But this assembly at which Castro read the Second Declaration of Havana in fact mustered far more than 1,000,000 people, in a total population—of an island 700 miles long—of a little over 6,000,000.—D.N.P.)

4. Certainly we are planning to have only one political party in the near future. We will have only one because we are united; parties represent classes and class conflicts, and we have no class conflicts; our people are united and want one party.

5. Yes, we are paying compensation in some cases of nationalised enterprises or other property, whilst in general we have not done so. The big latifundia,* the big industries, the big American properties, are of course taken without compensation; this is just, and the people want it; but it is wise and reasonable, and in accordance with the people's will, in respect of some different and smaller matters, to pay something.

*(*Large landed estates, generally employing very few people per square mile.—D.N.P.)*

6. Yes, the rôle of the students in the revolution, and in building up public opinion in and for the revolution, has been most important; and I think that the rôle of students in other Latin American countries is and will be of great importance too.

7. Yes, it is to be expected that our revolution will be followed by revolutions in other Latin American countries, each in its own time and in accordance with its own conditions. ('I will not indulge in any prophecies as to dates, or as to which will come first'.)

8. Yes, there is a little opposition in the country, from middle or lower-middle class elements which at first supported or pretended to support the revolution. It is negligible in the face of the overwhelming popular support and of the great material benefits already achieved, and there is no need to worry about it. I would number these opponents at about 100,000 in a population of over 6,000,000. Our lower-middle class has the peculiarity that before the revolution that it was far richer and more 'comfortable' than corresponding strata in other countries.

(The armed militia, a citizen force of about 900,000, would present such a danger in any country unless the régime had a clear and overwhelming support from the vast majority that nothing of the sort would be allowed.—D.N.P.)

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That is really the end of the summary of his answers; it was noticeable that he indulged in no prophecies about the general fate of Imperialism, or about what would happen at Punta del Este; he said nothing that threw any light on his views as to whether any new invasion would be attempted—a thing which on the surface seems an impossible enterprise to anyone who is *in* Cuba.

(*On this see my note of the interview with Blas Roca later.—D.N.P.*)

In all this long and friendly discussion, there were few interruptions in the way of people bringing him messages, etc.; but some way through he was approached by the director or producer of the fairly good and elaborately staged night-club-show that was going on in the theatre which forms part of the hotel, inviting him to come and see the show and to bring us with him. He agreed to do this, but for a time—quite a long time—he still went on with his talk with us, without any air of haste or of wanting to finish. When we actually ran out of questions, and the direct talks thus ended, we all walked through the kitchens into the show by a side entrance, and sat down at a table which had (presumably) been cleared for the purpose. I do not think that Castro had seen the show before any more than I had; his arrival was not announced, and so far as one could see the show went on as usual—there was a touch of good politics in it, but no more. Only a few people seemed to realise that he was there, in the dimly lighted auditorium. We all sat round the table; I happened to be near the front and Castro was at the back; he drank only tea or coffee, and smoked a cigar. He talked in low tones to one or two Spanish-speaking people who were next to him, and I heard nothing of what was said.

This went on for about an hour, when the show finally came to an end. Then, as the lights went up and the public began to leave, various people came up and accosted him in what is here the 'usual' way. By this time there were two or three of the people's militia (presumably selected ones) near him, as the first outward sign of anything like security. The director brought up and introduced two or three stars of the show, with whom Castro talked for quite a while; there was still not the slightest hint of any desire to get away (at nearly 3 a.m.). The stars, who were obviously very thrilled, seemed very intelligent.

After a good deal of this, at about 3 a.m. he began to go home, still as fresh as a daisy; the mildness of the efforts of his militiamen

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in trying to persuade the people around him to make room for him would have horrified the Metropolitan Police; he insisted on making sure that he shook hands with all the British delegates before he went!

Later I read in Spanish the long speech he made about the new party, parts of which *Labour Monthly* printed last month. In one passage he said: 'What sort of Marxist-Leninist am I? Half-way? No! We revolutionaries know nothing of half-way; we know 100 per cent; and we devote ourselves entirely, all our efforts, all our energy, to our task. It is, too, a great satisfaction to have been illiterate at eighteen and to feel oneself a revolutionary, as I do, at thirty plus—I think it is thirty-six! I have learnt something in the second eighteen years; and what a lot more there is to learn. We tell the people this, with complete frankness, with full loyalty, with all clarity, such as I have always used to the people. I have always spoken to them with complete frankness.'

From that and other passages, and from meeting him, you get a picture of a practical revolutionary of bourgeois origin, who has become a Marxist without being a profound theoretician like Blas Roca, whom I also met, as well as other leaders. But of that later.

(To be continued.)

SHARK AND SARDINES

At the Punta del Este Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of American States in January the United States Government with extreme difficulty and pressure just secured the adoption by the requisite two-thirds majority (representing a minority of the population of Latin America) a resolution disapproving of Cuba, but failed to secure the desired objective of endorsing intervention or economic sanctions against Cuba. The biting comment of Fidel Castro on a previous O.A.S. resolution on Cuba adopted at San Jose in August, 1960, is worth recording: 'When the time arrived to condemn the shark, the sardines got together and did not condemn the shark but another sardine. But it so happened that this other sardine was no longer a sardine.'

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SEE HOW THEY LIE

Quaestor

NECESSITY is the mother of invention. Whenever the British ruling class feel the necessity of stepping up hatred of the Soviet Union or disbelief in its strength, they never hesitate to invent the evidence.

Thus, early in 1919, they planned intensified war on Soviet Russia, already invaded by their troops. So they published an official White Paper containing reports that women had been nationalised there, from their commanders-in-chief at Archangel and in the Far East. All these reports were lies.[1]

In September, 1921, thinking that Soviet Russia—then stricken with famine—was fatally weakened, they wanted to trump up reasons for breaking off trade relations established with much difficulty six months before. So Lord Curzon, Foreign Secretary, sent a Note full of the most blatant forgeries about alleged anti-British propaganda at imaginary meetings—Lenin making a speech which he never delivered, another by a man who had been in jail for three months when he was supposed to have made it, reports by departments of the Third International which did not exist, etc. The Soviet reply, by Litvinov, made mincemeat of Curzon's inventions.[2]

In October, 1924, the ruling class wanted to get rid of the first Labour Government because it had signed (under pressure from the Labour rank and file) a treaty with the U.S.S.R. settling for good disputed financial questions between the two countries—a most 'dangerous' situation. An election campaign broke out. The Foreign Office, using various shady characters and currency speculators as its go-betweens, procured and sent out to the press an alleged letter from Zinoviev, President of the Third International, supposedly instructing British subjects to subvert the armed forces. The letter was a gross forgery, and was denounced as such, after a careful investigation in London and Moscow, by the T.U.C. itself.[3]

Between 1927 and 1933 Soviet economy was completely reorganised, the first Five Year Plan was put into effect and collective farming was introduced. Great difficulties and acute problems

[1] *A Collection of Reports on Bolshevism in Russia* (Stationery Office, 1919), pp. 32, 53, 68; and C. M. Roebuck, *The Nationalisation of Women. The Natural History of a Lie* (British Socialist Party, 1920).

[2] Notes from Lord Curzon, September 7, 1921, and from Maxim Litvinov, September 27, 1921, reprinted in *Anti-Soviet Forgeries* (Workers' Publications, 1927), pp. 17-31.

[3] T.U.C. General Council, *The 'Zinoviev' Letter. Report of Investigation*, 1925; and W. P. Coates, *The 'Zinoviev Letter'* (Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 1928).

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arose. The British ruling class did its best to take advantage of them—first by breaking off diplomatic relations with the U.S.S.R. (1927-1930) and then, when they were restored by the second Labour Government in 1930, by campaigning for a second rupture (1931-1933). In this campaign the Tory press—*The Times, Daily Mail, Morning Post, Daily Telegraph*—produced a flood of alleged reports of speeches by Soviet leaders, 'quotations' from articles in the Soviet press, Soviet Government 'decrees', etc., which were either complete inventions or such impudent distortions as to amount to forgeries.[4]

Some people think that those bad old days ended with the war, and that the changed balance of forces in the world has obliged the ruling class to observe at least some ordinary decencies in the matter of telling the truth about the Soviet Union. This is a complete delusion. Thus, at the present time Britain's export difficulties are causing great concern. There is a 'danger' that minds may turn to trade with the Socialist countries. Accordingly, 'someone' at the beginning of the year circulated an alleged statement by Lenin, suggesting that trade with the western countries was only a dodge for promoting revolution. In a B.B.C. debate on August 3 last about the need for, and possibilities of, expanding British-Soviet trade, one of the trump cards of the opposition was a 'quotation' from the alleged statement—to the effect that 'agents of the Comintern' would find their way through the western trade doors. The statement' was an utter forgery.

The threat of nuclear war and of growing armaments is a world-wide worry. People are naturally beginning to ask, why not accept the Soviet offers of general and complete disarmament, including nuclear weapons? On November 22 a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* stated, bold as brass:

> At the first Assembly of the United Nations the Russians rejected an American offer to destroy the atom weapons which the United States alone possessed and to outlaw their manufacture.

This was a downright lie. The American 'offer' was (i) to *continue* manufacturing atom bombs until a world-wide Atomic Development Authority was in 'effective operation' (ii) *not* to destroy its own stock of such weapons until that happened (iii) that this A.D.A. was to own or control all uranium and thorium supplies, and plants for producing fissionable materials, *in all countries* (iv) pending that time, any manufacture of material which *might* be used for an

[4] W. P. Coates, *Anti-Soviet Lies Nailed* (1930) and *More Anti-Soviet Lies Nailed* (1933). Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee.

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atomic bomb, other than through the A.D.A., would be illegal and punishable by war if necessary (v) that A.D.A. would include a representative of the U.S.S.R., but any decision to begin destroying the American bombs would require a two-thirds majority. Thus for an indefinite time to come the U.S.S.R. would be at the mercy of the U.S.A. and unable to change the situation. It was

> a perfect plan for preserving the American monopoly until it could gradually be turned over to a world authority, which would continue to be under the guidance and control of the United States and Britain, through the votes of their many friends and satellites in any United Nations body.[5]

Of course the Russians rejected it. The same leading article stated:

> It is within the Soviet Government's power to agree to international control and so to allow disarmament to begin. But they will not do so.

This was a lie. The Khrushchov memorandum to Kennedy (Vienna, 1960) stated that

> the Soviet Government is willing unconditionally to accept any Western control proposals if the Western powers accept the proposal for general and complete disarmament.

This offer has been repeated several times. But the fact is that the West has constantly rejected the Soviet disarmament proposals just *because* heavy cuts in armaments would begin immediately—whereas all their proposals would indefinitely postpone such cuts.[6]

There is a world-wide movement against colonialism. Scores of peoples whom the imperialist powers—Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland and the U.S.A.—had held down for many years, in some cases for centuries, by bullet, bayonet, arson of villages, air bombing, police batons and hired mercenaries, as long as they could, have successfully revolted, while others are still fighting. There is no secret about what made this possible. It was the tremendous further expansion of the Socialist world after the last war—from 200 million people to 1,000 millions—the resulting weakening still further of the capitalist world, and the continuing support, political and economic, of the Socialist countries, headed by the Soviet Union, for the colonial and ex-colonial peoples. This arouses the fury of the imperialists, particularly when they see control of the United Nations beginning to slip from their grasp as a result. Lord Home, surely the most reactionary, arrogant and unscrupulous Foreign Secretary Britain has had for 100 years, voiced this fury in a now notorious speech on December 28, in which he

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[5]D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War* (Allen & Unwin, 1961), Vol. I, ch. xiv.

[6]*Disarmament Diary* (British Soviet Friendship Society, September 2, 1961), and *Labour Monthly*, May, 1960 (pp. 213-5) and August, 1960 (pp. 342-3).

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said: 'Russia's colonialism is the most cruel and ruthless in history'. This was an example of the technique used by Hitler's propaganda lieutenant, Goebbels: 'Tell a lie big enough, some of it will stick'.

For what is the truth about the Soviet Union and colonies? In Tsarist days Russia had colonies, which showed the same features as India, Kenya, Ghana or the West Indies—illiteracy and high death-rate for the great majority, an incredibly low standard of living, long working hours and miserable pay for the workers and peasants, and excellent profits for foreign investors. In the British colonies much the same conditions in these respects still prevail—even to a large extent where British political rule has gone, so enfeebled was their economy. But in the former Tsarist colonies the foreign companies (Russian and non-Russian), their military and administrative officials, their police and paid tribal chiefs, have been 'cruelly' driven out. Self-management of agricultural communities run as co-operative farms, State-developed and worker-controlled industries opening up vast natural resources, and providing a well-paid livelihood for millions of workers who once were half-starved peasants or tribesmen, trade unions with extensive powers, education and cultural opportunities for all on an equal footing, brown, yellow and white, have been 'ruthlessly' provided. Well might Shri Subimal Dutt, Indian Ambassador to the U.S.S.R., write:

> The history of the Soviet Union during the last forty years has provided an inspiring example to us in India of what a people can achieve by their united effort to raise the living standard of the common man and to create a society in which the humblest and the lowliest can rise to the highest position in life.[7]

One more example. Western Germany is now industrially stronger than Hitler's Germany was, her generals dominate the Nato forces in central Europe, her navy is being built up to dominate the Baltic, she is well over half-way to open nuclear armament and is busily engaged in secret research on her own nuclear weapons, her new Great General Staff is growing up under the guise of a territorial reserves command, and the Communist Party, peace movements and other advanced forces are suppressed as under Hitler. The problem facing her foreign allies is to try and turn this menace away from themselves, to egg West German imperialism on against the U.S.S.R. as they were doing in 1933-1939. So along comes the *Daily Telegraph* of January 5 (only one example, of course) with a feature

[7] ISCUS (quarterly journal of the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society), October, 1961, p. 32; and P. Alampiev, *Where Economic Inequality is No More* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1959), ch. 2-6.

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article: 'Russia in 1962. Weaknesses Behind the Strength'—by its Russian expert. Among much other nonsense, he states that agriculture is still the 'Achilles heel' of the Soviet economy, and that it has 'failed hopelessly to deal with the straightforward problem of food production'. In other words: go ahead boys, sail into them, you will have it all your own way.

But what are the facts? Bear in mind that the population of Tsarist Russia in 1913 (within the present frontiers) was just under 160 millions, whereas today it is about 220 millions—an increase of 37½ per cent. And then look at this table, taken from the latest figures of the Central Board of Statistics of the U.S.S.R.:

Item	*Output in 1913*	*Output in 1960*	*Increase %*
Wheat	26·3 million tons	64·3 million tons	144
Potatoes	31·8 million tons	84·4 million tons	165
Meat and Fats	5 million tons	8·7 million tons	74
Milk	29·4 million tons	61·7 million tons	110
Eggs	11,900 millions	27,400 millions	130
Granulated Sugar	1·3 million tons	6·3 million tons	484
Butter*	104,000 tons	737,000 tons	708
Pastries	109,000 tons	1,744,000 tons	1,600
Beer	80·6 mill. dekalitres	249·8 mill. dekalitres	310
Vodka	118·9 mill. dekalitres	138·1 mill. dekalitres	16

*exclusive of butter produced and consumed by the collective farmers themselves, without putting it on the market.

So food production in most cases was far *more* per head of the population in 1960 than it was in 1913, and in *all cases* outstripped the increase in population—except for vodka, a very significant fact. Yet in 1913 people called Russia 'the granary of Europe'. Moreover, in 1913 the bulk of the foodstuffs produced belonged to a tiny group of capitalists—in 1960, to society. What a hopeless failure, indeed! Of course the Soviet people want more, and are taking steps to produce it: but that is no argument.

In 1871, after the Paris Commune (forerunner of the Soviet Union), Karl Marx wrote:

> Up to now it has been thought that the growth of the Christian myths during the Roman Empire was possible only because printing was not yet invented. Precisely the contrary. The daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spreads inventions over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (and the bourgeois cattle believe and enlarge upon them) in one day than could formerly have been done in a century.

How right Marx was.

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BOOKS

Socialism in the Nuclear Age

John Eaton

Lawrence & Wishart. 192 pp. 15s.

I HAVE no hesitation in saying that this is an outstanding contribution to the presentation in this country of the ideas of socialism. It is an exceptionally good book.

Let me list briefly some of the reasons why I think it deserves such high praise. In the first place it argues the case for socialism in contemporary terms. It is concerned with the world of today. It takes account of modern economic theory and the experience of the post-war world. It uses the Marxist method, but its indictment of capitalism is related to the society in which we now live. Secondly, the author presents his Marxist analysis in a manner and in words which are so obviously his own. There are very few books written from the same standpoint which depend less on quotations, catchphrases and jargon borrowed from others. *Socialism in the Nuclear Age* is written in attractive literary style and there is an originality and freshness about it which maintains the reader's interest from the first to the last page. Thirdly, John Eaton in his book has something new and important to say on a number of issues confronting the British socialist movement. His discussion of 'managed capitalism' and the so-called 'mixed economy' adds to our understanding of what it is possible and what it is impossible to do within capitalism to regulate economic activity and the level of employment.

His pages too on the meaning of poverty within capitalist Britain are extremely thoughtful. They give to the word poverty a much fuller meaning than is at first apparent. John Eaton shows how capitalist society tends to mangle and mutilate the human personality and condemns millions of people to a life in which there is sheer drudgery, boredom, insecurity and the frustration of genuinely creative instincts. His paragraphs on the necessity of freedom of thought and discussion constitute one of the most persuasively argued sections of the book. He shows that freedom of discussion is desirable not so much as an abstract right divorced from real life, but because it enables man to prepare himself, through the exchange of ideas, to meet changing circumstances with foresight and flexibility. The passing expediences of dogmatism and intolerance towards nonconformity, exact in the end, their own price. Creative thought is discouraged, initiative is stifled and material progress is retarded.

My fourth reason for recommending John Eaton's book so warmly is that in my view his arguments are overwhelmingly valid. His case against capitalism is mounted page after page in a most telling manner. He embraces not only the economic shortcomings of the system—this is his special field of study—but he is concerned also with the effect of capitalism on the personality and culture of man. Indeed, some of his most penetrating thoughts and some of his most memorable paragraphs deal with this aspect of the problem.

When there is so much to praise about John Eaton's book it may seem ungenerous to offer a couple of more critical observations. I would, how-

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ever, have preferred him to have discussed somewhat more fully the extent to which *within British capitalism* it has been possible for the trade union and labour movement to bring about improvements in the real standards of the working class. He recognises that this improvement has taken place, but he rather leaves the impression that it is frequently exaggerated. This, I think, is true, but the opposite is also sometimes true.

My second critical observation is in relation to the nationalisation of certain industries within capitalism. John Eaton lists a number of reasons why socialists should support the extension of nationalisation within capitalism. This, he rightly points out, is an alternative to complete socialisation, but in certain circumstances offers a practicable policy towards socialism. Of the reasons which he lists (pages 94-95) none refer directly to the wages and conditions of the workers employed in the industries to be nationalised. This omission was, I am sure, unintentional. Nevertheless, it is an omission. Certainly when the case for nationalisation is being argued with workers the question of wages and conditions is very much in their minds. It so happens that shortly afterwards (page 96) John Eaton says that the unpopularity of nationalisation is due, in the main, to bad working conditions and low wages. This, in my view, is one of the few statements in the book which contains more error than truth.

I repeat again that this is an extremely good book. Everyone who claims to think seriously about socialism should read it. This certainly includes all the readers of *Labour Monthly*.

J. E. MORTIMER.

The Homecoming

Leonard Barnes

Peter Davies, Ltd. 222pp.

THE full-length narrative in verse has made a surprising re-entry into the literary scene with biographies by Messrs. John Betjeman and Philip Toynbee. If these works may be regarded as of the 'Keepsake' type, which Victorian young ladies of intellectual pretensions displayed on their occasional tables, *The Homecoming*, by Leonard Barnes, employs the verse-form for a more serious purpose. This is nothing less than a philosophical explanation of 'the nature of things', in particular the nature and social development of man, after the example of Lucretius, the Latin poet of the first century B.C. who clothed the materialist philosophy of Epicurus in poetry. Leonard Barnes also writes from a materialist standpoint, and it is fascinating to follow his attempts to describe the evolution of man in society through the medium of verse, employing concepts and terms from the sciences, including dialectical materialism, anthropology and physics. His chosen verse-forms range from a Miltonic blank verse to the lyrical and the epigrammatic:

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while some passages are obscure, some terminology difficult to fit into a poetic mould, and some interpretations open to question, his wide range of reference and the very attempt to present a coherent explanation of the world in this form make *The Homecoming* a remarkable enterprise.

JUDITH TODD.

The Leaven of Life: The Story of George Henry Fletcher

Nellie Connole

Lawrence & Wishart. 212pp. 15s.

THERE ARE STILL many in the labour movement who could not call to mind the unemployed struggles of the years before the first world war, much more the struggles of the 'twenties and 'thirties, without seeing before them the burly, active figure of George Fletcher. And in the history of the advanced section of the working class—successively the Social-Democratic Federation, the British Socialist Party and the Communist Party—for over half a century its battles in Yorkshire, particularly Sheffield, constantly brought forward the same familiar name. This is the story of his life: not only his public life either, but the story of a man as his wife Kate and his neighbours knew him, struggling against poverty and adversity, from baker's apprentice to master baker, the industry he loved and for whose workers he fought. The story is told with maximum economy of words, fully documented but as thrilling as a novel. Once you take it up you find it hard to put down. Old hands will re-live in it many of their best years: younger people who want insight into the building of the British working class movement will find it, quick and deep, in Nellie Connole's book.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

African Political Parties

Thomas Hodgkin

Penguin African Series. 218 pp. 3s. 6d.

THOMAS HODGKIN'S latest book has been compiled with the thorough and thoughtful research which we have now come to associate with his writings on Africa. Such a book is certainly timely, and both the general reader and the student will gain much from it, including a useful appendix of the major African parties, 1945-1960. Mr. Hodgkin explains their background and the events leading to their formation. Considerable detail is provided on organisation, and further chapters deal with different types, their activities, and objectives. Despite the title, the chapter on activities devotes a mere seven pages to the struggle for independence led by these parties; the one on objectives fails to give a full and rounded picture of the kind of Africa for which they are striving. Admittedly this is intended as a short book, and is not meant to be a history of the struggles of the African people in the twentieth century. But less detail on minor questions and more attention to politics would have undoubtedly made it a better book.

JACK WODDIS.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

can be found. It is probably much cheaper. But what a row there was about our Tom! Different days? There's just one little thing unchanged. The miners, engineers and railwaymen still don't own the Britain their class has made: and that is why we still have to struggle, these fifty years later.

An all too-familiar note: the miners' executive in March, 1912, had to pass a resolution expressing 'their indignation at a certain portion of the press which are deliberately misleading the public'. Today an enormous struggle has to be put up against the attempts of the capitalist press to confuse, as Peter Kerrigan points out in *Unite and Fight*. 'Backslider' remarks: 'What should we have done through this long dark night of stress and storm without the guiding light of the L.M. torch? Without it many of us would have floundered and sunk in despair.' He was one of many writing to thank us for *The Cold War Balance Sheet*, which a Belfast reader thought 'so important that it ought to be printed as a pamphlet and sold in thousands. It's the best explanation of the cold war yet.' A Londoner called it 'a super-excellent summary.' And again, how readers took to the Castro article! As one said: 'What a delight to see a little island like Cuba outpacing the might of the U.S.' I hope he will find absorbing D. N. Pritt's lively *Cuba Travel Notes* which start in this issue. In my opinion it is a bumper number which the grandchildren of the 1912 warriors will find of lasting value.

This month I have no space to write of the fund, only to announce the splendid January total:

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